
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1110 6th Street, NW	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Mount Vernon Square Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	June 28, 2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#18-440	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

The applicant, owner Verbena Ventures LLC, seeks concept review for a basement areaway, a three-story plus basement rear addition, and partial fourth floor addition and roof decks to a three-story contributing rowhouse in the Mount Vernon Square Historic District. Plans were prepared by Arcadia Design.

Property Description and Context

1110 6th Street is the last survivor of a row of three attached houses built in 1873 by owner G.W. Cissell. The house displays several characteristics of postbellum architecture including grandly proportioned windows on a flat façade and a wood cornice consisting of Greek Revival flourishes like the palmette in the plancier at the cornice return. The first floor sits above a raised basement with uncharacteristically large windows. A cellar exists below the basement. The house does not have a rear wing and the long gradual sloping roof profile of its south elevation is visible from both 6th Street and L Street.

Previous Review

The Board reviewed a similar concept design for this property submitted by a different owner in June 2015. That concept consisted of three significant components: a three-story rear dog-leg addition 28 feet deep, a partial fourth floor addition 30 feet long (with roof decks front and back) to span both the existing house and new rear addition, and an 8x16 foot front basement areaway to house a multi-level flight of stairs down to the cellar.

The Board found the concept for the rear addition to be compatible with the historic district and delegated final approval to staff but with the conditions that: (1) the partial fourth floor be removed because it would result in substantial demolition, result in visible alteration of the building's roofline, and result in an incompatible addition atop the building that would be visible from both L and 6th Streets; (2) the front roof deck be removed because of its visibility from street view; and (3) the multi-level front basement entrance be removed.

Proposal

The current concept is very similar to the concept design submitted by the previous owner in 2015. The plan calls for a three-story rear addition (30 feet deep) and a partial fourth floor addition, 55 feet long, with roof decks front, back and on top, to span both the existing house and the new rear addition. Instead of the previously multi-level stairs down to the cellar, a small basement entrance is proposed to be located under the existing main entrance.

As in the 2015 proposal, the rear and roof additions would be prominently visible due to the undeveloped project site to the south. Development was proposed in 2006 and in 2014 for this adjacent site, but remains unpermitted and unbuilt. Depending on the extent and size of the redevelopment on this site in the future, the visibility of the rear and roof additions at 1110 could be reduced or eliminated from this perspective. The proposed roof addition and front deck would remain visible from 6th Street regardless of the future development of the corner site.

Evaluation

The proposed basement areaway is compatible with the historic district and the Board's design guidelines for basement entrances.¹

While two feet longer in footprint than that previously proposed, the rear addition remains compatible in height, mass and design for the historic district. It is recommended that the Board reaffirm its previous finding of compatibility for a large three-story rear addition.

However, the fourth-floor addition and roof decks remain incompatible for the same reasons that the Board found in 2015. In that review, the Board applied its regulations for substantial demolition and principles for additions and found that the concept was incompatible as it would have required the substantial demolition of the house (removal of the rear wall and roof), resulted in incompatible alteration of the character-defining profile of the south elevation of the house which is visible from both 6th Streets and L Street, and a roof addition and deck visible over the top of the building.

The current concept has strengths and weaknesses compared to its predecessor, but the final assessment is largely the same. The rear wall is proposed to be salvaged, restored and incorporated as an interior feature of the project--thus reducing some amount of demolition--but the roof would still need to be demolished and the profile of the house would be altered. The size and location of the fourth-floor addition now proposed, and its associated roof decks, is larger than the previous concept and would produce a rooftop addition even more visible from 6th Street than the 2015 proposal. It is recommended that the Board reaffirm its previous finding that the fourth-floor roof addition and front deck be eliminated for a finding of compatibility for the project.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board reaffirm its finding of compatibility for a three-story rear addition at 1110 6th Street NW and find the concept design to be consistent with the preservation law on the conditions that:

- 1. the partial fourth floor be removed, and*
- 2. roof decks be restricted to the rear addition.*

The HPO recommends that final approval be delegated to staff.

¹ *Preservation and Design Guidelines for Basement Entrances and Windows (2011).*